



Lucina sine Concubitu.

A

LETTER

Humbly address'd to the

ROYAL SOCIETY.



(Price One Shilling)

THE

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Lucina sine Concubitu.

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Humbly address'd to the

ROYAL SOCIETY;

IN WHICH

Is proved by most Incontestible EVIDENCE,
drawn from Reason and Practice, that a
WOMAN may conceive and be brought to
Bed without any Commerce with MAN.

*Ore omnes versæ in Zephyros stant rupibus altis,
Exceptantque leves auras, et sæpe sine ullis
Conjugiis vento gravidæ (mirabile dictu)
Saxa per, et scopulos et depressas convalles
Diffngiunt, &c.* VIRG. Georgic. 3.

*Cûr ego desperem fieri sine conjuge mater,
Et parere intacto, dummodo casta, viro?*
OVID. Fast. 5.

*Or as other Authors sing,
The frolic Wind that breathes the Spring,
Zephyr with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a Maying,
Fill'd her with thee a Daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonnair.*
MILTON's L'Allegro.

L O N D O N :

Printed ; And Sold by M. COOPER, at
the Globe, in Pater-noster-Row. 1750.

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September 7, 1951

LETTER

Humbly addressed to the

ROYAL SOCIETY

IN WHICH

is proved by most inconclusive Evidence,
drawn from History and Practice, that a
Woman may receive and be brought to
Bed without any assistance whatsoever.

By JOHN WILKINS, Esq.
of the Middle Temple, Barrister at Law.
LONDON:
Printed by J. Sturges, at the Sign of the Sun in St. Dunstons Church-yard, near St. Dunstons Church, in the County of Middlesex.

1750.

Of an extraordinary Nature,
The Author has been informed by
Several of his Friends, that
It is not the first time, that
This has been a subject of
to some of the most
Masters of the Art.

L O N D O N :

Printed: And Sold by M. Cooper, at
the Globe, in Pall-mall, 1750.

A
L E T T E R

Humbly address'd to the
R O Y A L S O C I E T Y .

GENTLEMEN,

THE great Encouragement you shew to all learned Investigations of Nature (witness those excellent Treatises published every Year in your Philosophical Transactions) emboldens me to lay before you a Discovery, which I believe is entirely new, and which I am sure will equal any thing that has been offered to the World since Philosophy has been a Science. Excuse my Presumption, and forbear your Censures, till you have read my Narrative. No less than

B

fifteen

fifteen Years of my Life have been spent in bringing this *Arcanum* to a Maturity ; and when both Theory and Practice had confirmed me in it, my first Thoughts inclined me to go over into *France*, and put up for the Prize at *Bourdeaux*, where Philosophers shew Problems, as Gardeners do Carnations at a Florist's Feast. But considering with myself that your illustrious Society might probably esteem yourselves affronted, if you had not the Maidenhead of my Secret, and at the same time disdaining to come in Competition with the lower Race of Philosophers, who write about Tides and Eclipses, and Laws of Gravitation, the trivial Amusements of idle Speculatists, and Almanack-makers ! I say, out of reverence for your eminent Body, and some Degree of Pride in Conjunction, I resolved to appeal at once to the Public, and more particularly to address myself to your Worships. Not to keep you any longer in Suspence, I have found out, and am going to prove by most in-

con-

contestable Evidence, that a Woman may conceive and be brought to Bed, without any Commerce with Man. This, Gentlemen, I dare say, you will allow to be a very wonderful Discovery ; and though I might easily satisfy People of your penetrating Insight into the Works of Nature, with a mere physical Account of human Seed, and the Anatomy of a Female Womb, yet as I am to combat the Simplicity of the Ignorant, and the Prejudices of the Perverse, I will describe at large what first suggested this Thought to me, and how I proceeded afterwards from Conjecture to Demonstration.

The Lot which Providence assigned me in Life, was to practise Physick in a Country Town ; to which I united the Sisterly Science of Man-Midwifry ; and though it ill becomes any one to boast of his own Merit, yet I will venture to assert, that in the Course of my Practice, I have helped near as many People into the

World as ever I helped out of it: which rendered my Fame so great for obstetric Operations, that I engrossed the Custom of all the Breeding Women in the fruitful County of ———. But not to trouble you with more of my private History than is necessary, as I was sitting alone one Afternoon, smoking my *Postmeridian* Pipe, I received a Message from a neighbouring Gentleman, informing me that his Daughter was dangerously ill, and desiring my immediate Attendance. When I was arrived, and had examined the young Lady concerning her Complaints, I was surprized to find in her all the Symptoms of Pregnancy; but as I know very well how tenderly Ladies value their Reputations, even after they have lost them, I withdrew the Father aside into a separate Room for the Sake of Privacy, and there with great Concern, told him what my Office obliged me to declare, that his Daughter was apparently with Child, and very near the Time
of

of her Labour. The old Gentleman was struck with Horror at the News, and immediately rushing into the Chamber, upbraided both his Wife and Daughter in the bitterest Terms, for concealing so important a Secret from him, and bringing such a Disgrace on the Family. The young Lady turned up a Face of inexpressible Innocence and Amazement, and immediately fainted away into her Mother's Arms. 'Tis usually observed, I know, that all Professions which delight in Blood, from the Physician down to the Butcher (who are employed to disburthen Nature of her Numbers, lest the World should grow too populous) outlive the Sensations of Humanity, and never suffer their Minds to be interrupted with Pity ; but though I had been long used to the Sight of Misery, and had acquired a sufficient Constancy of Features, there was something in the Scene before me too powerful for Custom, and I really found myself inclining to Compassion.

But

But the good old Lady soon put a Stop to these Womanish Emotions of my Spirit, falling upon me with the most outrageous Abuse, for *daring to asperse her Daughter's Reputation in that wicked ruffianly Manner*, vowing *it was a Lie, a damn'd Lie*, and *she wonder'd her Husband could bear it without Resentment*. To all which I replied with some Acrimony, that I was not used to be treated with such Language, that I knew very well how disagreeable a Truth it must be to a Parent's Ear, but since my Office could not protect me from Abuse, my Honour obliged me to take my Leave: And so making a Bow I left the Family to grow calm at Leisure, not doubting but I should have a second Summons, when they had reasoned themselves into Temper. Accordingly a Chariot came to fetch me the next Morning; and though the Mother could hardly bridle in her Passion, and the young Lady protested every Moment she was innocent, Affairs were now too far advanced

vanced to be concealed, and about Five in the Afternoon, I conducted into the World the little malicious Witness, whose Evidence was so fatal to the young Lady's Character, and so necessary to the Vindication of mine. Yet still, after this seemingly conclusive Conviction, she continued to make the same earnest Declarations to all who visited her ; and one Day as I was sitting alone with her, after she was pretty well recovered from the Shock of her Delivery, she caught me hastily by the Hand, and with many Tears, and many Affirmations of Innocence, begged of Heaven to blast her immediately with Lightning, if ever she had known a Man. Such earnest Protestations, delivered with such an Air of Truth, and accompanied with so many moving Tears, wrought upon me so strongly, that, I knew not how, I found myself strangely inclined to believe her, even against the Remonstrances of Reason and Experience. Full of what she had said, I returned Home in a very thoughtful Mood,

and

and continued uneasy and perplexed for a great while ; till one Day happening to take up Mr. *Woollaston's Religion of Nature delineated* , I fell accidentally upon a Passage, which struck such a sudden Light on my Imagination, that I shall beg Leave to quote it at large, as the Ground-work and Foundation of my whole System.

That great Philosopher disputing whether human Souls are traduced from Parents to their Children, or supernaturally conveyed into the Fœtus at the Time of its Birth (which is a very worthy Subject of philosophic Enquiry, because impossible to be determined, and much a-kin to that learned Disquisition of old,* whether Eggs
or

* *Censorinus* says, many of the old Philosophers asserted the Eternity of the World upon this excellent invincible Argument, *quod negent omnino posse reperiri, avesne ante an ova generata sint ; cum et ovum sine ave, et avis sine ovo gigni non possit.* This interesting Question was once much agitated, as may be
seen

or the Chicken in them are first created) in the fifth Section of his incomparable Work has the following remarkable Passage :——“ If then the Semina out of
 “ which Animals are produced, are (as I
 “ doubt not) Animalcula already formed;
 “ which being distributed about, especial-
 “ ly in some opportune Places, are taken
 “ in with Aliment, or perhaps the very
 “ Air; being separated in the Bodies of
 “ Males by Strainers proper to every
 “ Kind, and then lodged in their seminal
 “ Vessels do there receive some kind of
 “ Addition and Influence; and then be-
 “ ing transferred into the Wombs of the
 “ Females, are there nourished more plen-
 “ tifully, and grow too big to be longer
 “ confined : I say if this be the Case, &c.”
 And again, “ I cannot but conclude that
 “ there are Animalcula of every Tribe
 C “ originally

seen by *Macrobius* and *Plutarch*, who calls it,
 το ἀπορον ἢ πολλὰ πρῶγματα τοῖς ζήτητικοῖς παρέ-
 χον πρόβλημα.

“ originally formed by the almighty Pa-
 “ rent, to be the Seed of all future Ge-
 “ nerations ; and it is certain the Analogy
 “ of Nature in other Instances, and mi-
 “ croscopical Observations, do strongly
 “ abet what I have said.”——These are
 the Words of the great and learned Mr.
Woollaston, which I had no sooner read,
 than I was instantly thrown into a *Reverie*,
 and began to reflect with myself, that if
 such little Embryos or *Animalcula* are so
 dispersed about, and taken in at the
 Mouth with Air or Aliment ; and if no-
 thing more is required than a certain hot
 Bed for them to dilate and expand them-
 selves, till they grow too big to be long-
 er confined, after the Manner of Seeds in
 a Cucumber-Frame : I say, if this be the
 whole Mystery of Generation (and Expe-
 riment has since fully convinced me that
 it is so) I began to question, why might
 not the Fœtus be as compleatly hatched in
 the seminal Vessels of the Woman, as when
 it passes through the Organs of both
 Sexes ?

Sexes? Why should the *Animalculum* or little Animal go such a tedious Progress, make such a round-about Tour, when there is so much nearer a Road, so much shorter a Cut into Day-light? As to what the great Philosopher mentions of Strainers in the Bodies of Males, that was plainly owing to his Want of Skill in Anatomy; and the only Doubt now remaining with me was, whether Animalcula did really float about in the Air, and slide down the Throat as he described? for I had been used to think they were originally lodged in the Loins of the Males; But if Mr. *Woolaston's* Hypothesis could be proved, the Consequence, I thought, would then be easy and undeniable. Here again I was at a Stand; all before me was Darkness and Doubt; I knew not if there were any such Animalcula, or if there were, I supposed them too small to be discovered by the naked Eye, and tho' perhaps they might be discernible with the Help of a Microscope, yet I knew

not where to seek for those *opportune Places*, hinted at by the great Metaphysician.

In this second Perplexity, Fortune again stept in to my Assistance, and my Doubts were unriddled by the following Passage in *Virgil's Georgicks* :

*Ore omnes versæ in Zephyros stant rupibus
altis,*

Exceptantq; leves auras ; et sæpe sine ullis

Conjugiis vento gravidæ (mirabile dictu)

Saxa per et scopulos et depressas convalles

*Diffugiunt ; non Eure tuos, neque Solis ad
ortus,*

In Boream Caurumque, aut unde nigerrimus

Auster

Nascitur, et pluvio contristat frigore cælum.

Thus

Thus translated by Mr. Dryden ;

*The Mares to Cliffs of rugged Rocks repair,
And with wide Nostrils snuff the western Air:
When (wondrous to relate) the Parent Wind,
Without the Stallion, propagates the Kind.
Then fir'd with amorous Rage, they take
their Flight
Thro' Plains, and mount the Hill's unequal
Height.*

*Nor to the North, nor to the rising Sun,
Nor Southward to the rainy Regions run,
But boring to the West, and hov'ring there,
With gaping Mouths they draw prolific Air.*

Now it is well known that this same Virgil was a great Natural Philosopher, as well as a Poet and a Farrier ; and here we see he confidently asserts, that it was very common for Mares to become pregnant, without any Coition, only by turning their

their Faces to the West, and snuffing up the Wind in that Quarter : But all Naturalists being agreed that there is a great Analogy and Similitude in the Generation of all Animals, whether Bipeds or Quadrupeds, it occurred to me, that what had happened to a Mare, might for this very Reason, happen to a Woman.

Thus was I got successfully through two Steps of my Discovery : The great *Woollaston* has told me, that *Animalcula* were dispersed about in *opportune Places*, to be the Seed of all Generations ; and the greater *Virgil* had told me, that certain Mares of his Acquaintance were were impregnated by a West Wind, which therefore I concluded to be one of those *opportune Places*, and considered it as the proper Vehicle of these floating Embryos.

But not willing to rely on Hypothesis only, or presume on the Authority of
great

great Names, especially in this enlightened Age, where experimental Philosophy is so triumphant, and nothing goes down that is not made obvious to our Senses, I resolved to have Demonstration before I ventured to publish my Thoughts to the World. There are, I know, a droll Set of Gentlemen, who think themselves authorized to tell any Lies in Print, and afterwards to quarrel with the World for not believing them: But for my Part, I write purely and simply for the Love of Truth, for the Use and Emolument of my Countrymen; and I should esteem myself the most unworthy of all Beings, if I presumed to amuse them with Fables, or abuse them with Forgeries.

Accordingly after much Exercise of my Invention, I contrived a wonderful cylindrical, catoptrical, rotundo-concavo-convex Machine (whereof a very exact Print will speedily be published for the Satisfaction of the Curious, designed by
Mr.

Mr. *H—y—n*, and engraved by Mr. *V—rtu*) which being hermetically sealed at one End, and electrified according to the nicest Laws of Electricity, I erected it in a convenient Attitude to the West, as a kind of Trap to intercept the floating Animalcula in that prolific Quarter of the Heavens. The Event answered my Expectation ; and when I had caught a sufficient Number of these small, original, unexpanded Minims of Existence, I spread them out carefully like Silk-worm's Eggs upon White-Paper, and then applying my best Microscrope, plainly discerned them to be little Men and Women, exact in all their Limbs and Lineaments, and ready to offer themselves little Candidates for Life, whenever they should happen to be imbibed with Air or Nutrimment, and conveyed down into the Vessels of Generation.

After this first Success in my Undertaking, I continued to make Experiments
of

of various Kinds, too tedious to be related, for a whole Year, till I had at length fully established the Doctrine of Winds and Embryos : and I find that as other Insects are usually brought by an Easterly Wind, your *Human Insects* are always wafted from the opposite Quarter : the Swarms of both appear like Blights to the naked Eye, and both seem destined to much the same End of Existence, *fruges consumere nati*, born to consume the Fruits of the Ground.

Oftentimes, while I was viewing them through my Glass, my Imagination wou'd turn romantic upon the Subject, and represent to me the great Variety of Fortune these Insects might go through, whenever they should happen to be called out into Day-light. I said in my Mind, this little Reptile may be an *Alexander*, that a *Faustina*, another a *Tully*, and another a Mountebank ; and I was struck with Admiration to consider how many

D

Heroes,

Heroes, and Patriots, and Legislators, and Monarchs, were now contained on a Sheet of Paper, whose great Souls in Time to come, may make them esteem the whole World too confined a Scene for their Ambition. I remembered the *Sarcasm of Juvenal*, as true before Life as after Death, *Expenden Annibalem*, &c. and I repeated with a kind of Enthusiasm those excellent Lines in *Dr. Garth's Dispensary*;

*Now she unfolds the faint and dawning Strife
Of infant Atoms kindling into Life;
How the dim Speck of Entity began
To extend its recent Form, and stretch to Man;
To how minute an Origin we owe
Young Ammon, Cæsar, and the great Nassau;*

But now the great Trial of all was come, which I believe would have puzzled a whole College of Physicians, and set at nought all the consulting Powers of *W—rw—k-Lane*. The preparatory Points were established to my entire Satisfaction,
but

but whether *Animalcula* could be ripen'd into Existence by passing through the seminal Vessels of a Woman only, was still a Question; and how to make the Experiment, *hic labor, illud opus*. Very hard it was to know when a Woman had imbibed the necessary Seed, and harder still to restrain her from all Commerce with Man, till the Experiment had Time to take Effect. If I made Choice of a married Woman, there the Difficulties were innumerable; or if I made Choice of a Maiden, Virginity has in all Ages been esteemed a very brittle Ware, and I presume has not greatly mended its Nature of later Days. Sometimes I thought of taking a Wife, over whom I could usurp an absolute Authority, and lock her up till the Day of her Labour; but fearing she might grow desperate, when she shou'd find I had only married her to try an Experiment upon her, and at the same time grievously mistrusting the Continuance of my own Affection, after I had ac-

complished my Ends, I dismissed that Project, and resolved, after much Perplexity, to hazard all upon a Chambermaid. Accordingly having first perswaded the Girl she was ill, I read *Jacob Behmen* five Times over, and then mixing up some *Animalcula* in a Chymical Preparation, I administer'd them to her as a Dose of Physick. After which I discarded my Footman, and suffer'd no Male Creature in human Shape to approach my Doors ; nay so great was my Caution to have my Stratagem succeed, that I hardly permitted a Dog of the masculine Gender to enter my House.

In about six Months it was very visible the Medicine had taken Effect, and let the Reader imagine if he can, the Joy I felt, when first I perceived her begin to bourgeon : At the same time too a little Circumstance happened, which heightened my Joy, and put the manner of her Conception beyond all Possibility of doubt. As I was sitting alone one Morning in my Study,

Study, ruminating on this great Event, the Girl came in to me with Tears in her Eyes, and having obtained my Leave to ask a Question, entreated me earnestly to tell her, *if it was possible to breed after three Years?* Though I guessed the Drift of her Question, yet affecting an Air of Ignorance, and putting on a grave Physician's Aspect, I ordered her to be more explicit; whereupon she proceeded, with frequent Breaks of Crying, to tell me how much she was astonished at some Symptoms, that *Heaven above knew what was the Matter with her, but she verily believed herself a breeding, and yet she could take her Bible Oath, she had not been — — been—been touched by a Man for these three Years.** — So then, said I, with a sterner

* When I wrote this, I had not seen a remarkable Case published in the *Philosophical Transactions* of September, of a Woman, from whom a Foetus was extracted, that had been lodged thirteen Years in the *Fallopian Tubes*, sent from *Riga* by Dr. *James Mounsey*, Physician to the *Czarina's Army*, together with
the

er Countenance and a Tone of Severity, You confess then that about three Years ago, you was guilty of Incontinency!—*Yes Sir*, replied she, *to be sure it would be a Folly to deny it to a Man of your Learn-*

the Bones of the said Foetus, as a Present to the *Royal Society of London*. The Woman, as we are told in that ingenious Treatise, was a Soldier's Wife of *Abo in Finland, of a middle Stature*, who being pregnant for the third Time in the Year 1730, was afflicted with violent Pains and Twistings of the Bowels, &c.—and continuing sickly for ten Years afterwards, in the Month of *September* 1741, she pierced her Navel with an Awl, out of which ran a yellow-coloured Water, &c.—In the Month of *June* two small Bones came out, &c. and in *October* 1742, she was taken in Hand by Dr. *Mounsey* and Mr. *Geitle* Surgeon, who thrust a grooved Probe into the *Fistula*, and made an Incision with a Bistoury, upwards and obliquely, from the *Linea alba*, into the Cavity of the *Abdomen*; but the Woman being unruly (as well she might) and the Operation not going on according to the Doctor's liking, he proceeded no farther till the next Day, &c. At the next Operation the Incision was carried downwards, &c. but Care taken not to make the external Wound larger than needful, lest the *Omentum* and Guts should fall out, &c.—In short, the Foetus was at length

Learning — — to be sure I must confess that about three Years ago—to be sure Sir, I was not quite so good, Sir, as I should have been, Sir.—My last Master, Sir, who was a Parson, Sir,—God forgive him and me too,—I am sure, I have repented it a hundred Times, and I hope he has done the same. — The courteous Reader, I hope, will pardon my descending to such low Particulars, which I confess are beneath the Dignity of a Philosopher ; but as it very much concerns me,

in

length extracted Piece-meal at several difficult Operations. Now comparing all these Circumstances together, it seems reasonable to believe that this Fruit never was in the Cavity of the Womb, but that the impregnated *Ovum* was stopt in its Passage through one of the *Fallopian* Tubes, where it grew and was detained so many Years. Nothing therefore can be concluded from hence against the Cause I have assigned of my Maid's Pregnancy (as a certain learned Gentleman of the *Royal Society*, who communicated this Story to me, seemed to imagine) for the Cases are very different, and the uncommon Delay of this *Finland* Woman's Delivery was owing to the præternatural Situation of the Fœtus.

in an Affair of such Moment and Importance to the World, to shew how regularly and cautiously I proceeded, it was necessary to describe the Girl's Simplicity as a Proof her Honesty. Authors who write only for the Amusement of Mankind, may chuse and omit Circumstances at their own Pleasure, according to the Rule of *Horace*

— — — *Quæ*
Desperes tractata nitescere posse, relinquo.

But we who are unfortunately tied down to Truth, must write as it were in Fetters, and are obliged to keep on in the direct Road, without the Privilege of turning aside to entertain ourselves with Prospects. Be it sufficient, however, to say, that at the nine Months End, the Girl was delivered of a chopping Boy, whom I have ever since educated as my own, spite of all the Calumny of the Neighbourhood; and I cannot doubt, but in time
he

he will rise to be a Judge or an Alderman.

Thus, Gentlemen of the R—l S—y, I hope I have proved in the most incontestable manner, that a Woman may conceive without any Commerce with Man ; that the World has been in an Error for six thousand Years, and probably would have continued in it six thousand more, if I had not been born on purpose to break thro' silly Prejudices of Education, and undeceive Mankind in so material a Point. Material I must call it ; for how different is this from all the Discoveries of *Isaac Newton* the Star-gazer ? His, all of them, end in Speculation, but mine extend to Practice ; his are only calculated for the Perusal of a few College-Pedants, but mine offer themselves to the World in general : And I shall shortly publish a large Volume to shew that this is the most natural Way of being born, grounding my Demonstration on the following infallible Argument, which I have drawn up syllogistically,

E

giftically, to prove my wonderful Talents in Logic.

* Nature (say certain Authors of great Erudition) is a very frugal old Lady, and a prodigious good Oeconomist : She is observed to give herself as little Trouble as she can, and to do every thing at the cheapest hand.

But *Animalcula* may be hatched as compleatly in a Female Womb, as when they take the more tedious Progress thro' the Loins of the Males also.

Ergo, That is the right Road into Life, which is the shortest Road.

And now—what shall I say next ? As it often happens that the Use and Practice of a Thing are known, before the Theory of it is discovered, (for Instance, Men of War

* This is a Method much practised by the learned Mr. *W—rb—n*, I suppose for the same Reason, to shew his Skill in chopping Logic,

War could batter down Towns with Bombs long before it was proved that Projectiles describe a parabolic Curve, and little Boys had amused themselves with the Shadows of a magic Lanthorn many a Day ere some great Philosophers undertook to explain the Mysteries of that wonderful Machine) so has it fallen out in the Subject now under our Consideration: History has here and there furnished an Example, and some Physicians of Antiquity have accidentally glanced upon the Subject; but still I think I may challenge to myself the Merit of an original Invention, and it would be very hard if a few Hints loosely dropt in old unfashionable Authors, which too I never saw till after I had established my Theory, should prevail so far as to fix upon me the odious Seandal of Plagiarism. There are, I know, a Sort of malevolent Readers, who take an infinite Pleasure in telling you that all Authors have stolen their Works since the Days of one *Orpheus*; and how lucky is it for that old

French Poet, that we know not the Names of any of his Predecessors? but more especially they have recourse to this Device, whenever they find it not quite so easy to answer the Doctrine of a Book, and yet are determined to cry down its Reputation: Then we are sure to hear, *Lord Sir! the Fellow stole it all; there is not a Page, nor a Line, nor a Word, nor a Syllable, nor a Letter, nor a Comma of it his own; I can turn to the very Book and Place, from whence he pilfer'd it all.* Now that I may anticipate this heavy Censure, and save certain ingenious Critics the Trouble of turning back to the good old Writer (Peace unto his *Manes*, whoever he be) from whom I transcribed this little Treatise, I have determined to produce of my own accord what few Passages I have accidentally met with upon this Subject, and afterwards I shall leave the World to decide, whether in spite of such occasional Hints, I may not still be allowed to be the sole Proprietor of this wonderful Hypothesis.

Galen,

Galen, in his celebrated Treatise upon the Measles, wherein he endeavours to account for the Origin of that Distemper, delivers it as a common Opinion, that it was brought into the World by a Woman, born without the Assistance of a Father; but he seems to treat this as a vulgar Fable, and calls it a *Notion of the Multitude*.

Hippocrates informs us, that his Mother used frequently to tell him, she had no carnal Intercourse with his Father for near two Years before his Birth, but that she found herself strangely influenced one Evening, as she was walking in a Garden. His Father obtained a Divorce on this Occasion, and the good Woman fell under the Reproach of all her Acquaintance: But I hope this Treatise will vindicate her Memory from the Infamy, which has ever since attended it through all succeeding Times.

If we look back to the fabulous Ages of the World, when every thing was aggrandized by poetic Ornament, we read of many ancient Ladies, got with Child by such impossible Methods, that I believe they must have owed their Pregnancy to what I have been describing, and I hope all Commentators and Mythologists will for the future fall in with my Explication. For what else are we to think of *Juno's* growing big-bellied only with eating a Piece of Cabbage, † which *Flora* gathered for her in the *Olenian* Fields? 'Tis plain she must have swallowed some Animalcula at the same time, and thus became with Child of *Mars*. How else are we to account for the odd Conception of *Danae* in her Imprisonment? Some old Oracle

† *Quod petis, Oleniis, inquam, mihi missus ab arvis
Flos dabit; est hortis unicus ille meus.*

Protinus harentem decerpsi pollice florem

Fitque potens voti, Marisque creatus erat.

Ovid. Fast. 5.

Oracle had foretold, that her Father *Acrisus* should have his Throat cut by a Grandson, and to defeat this Prediction, he locked up his only Daughter in a brazen Tower, under such close Confinement, that it was impossible for any thing but Wind to get Access to her; yet in these Circumstances the Lady was brought to Bed of the most mighty *Perseus*, who accomplished the Oracle in putting *Acrisus* to death. The Poets indeed tell us a strange improbable Story of *Jupiter's* raining himself thro' the Tiles of the House in a golden Shower; but this is plainly a poetic Fiction, invented to account for a puzzling Phenomenon.

The Story of *Boreas'* running away with a young Heiress out of a Garret Window, and getting her with Child (as *Ovid* describes it in his *Metamorphosis*) is more immediately to our Purpose, and directly points out the Manner of her Conception. We all know, that 'tis the Profession of Poetry

Poetry to personalize all its Objects, and if a Lady found herself impregnated with Wind, nothing was so natural as to make a God of that Element, and impute the Effects to supernatural ‡ Power : tho' I confess there is an Impropriety here according to my System, but that may be owing to the Looseness of poetic Description, or perhaps the Lady mistook the Quarter of the Wind in telling her Story. In general we may conclude, whenever we read of Virgins got with Child by Rivers, by Dragons, by golden Showers, &c. &c. that it was Wind, nothing in the World but Wind, only for want of knowing the real Cause, they were glad to assign imaginary ones ; and the Poets getting hold of such improveable Topics, so overloaded them with Additions of their own, that

‡ In this manner we must interpret what *Ovid* puts into the Mouth of *Flora*, where she tells us she was ravished by *Zephyrus*,

Ver erat, errabam ; Zephyrus conspexit, abibam :

Insequitur, fugio : fortior ille fuit.

Lib. V. Fast. 201. et dehinc,

that in the End they were all considered in the Light of Fable and Romance.

If we descend from these allegoric Ages to succeeding Times, when History had learnt a more sober Style, and was contented to tell Truth without Disguise, we shall find some few Examples here also to our Purpose. *Diodorus Siculus* informs us; in an old Edition of his Works, communicated to me by my learned and industrious Friend the Rev. Dr. T----r, that a certain Sorceress of *Egypt*, pretended, among other supernatural Claims, to be able to breed without the Help of Man, and under Colour of these Pretences would have perswaded People to believe her the celebrated *Isis*, returned to visit her native Country; but at last a Priest of *Taautus* or *Mercury* was found in Bed with her, and so the Affair was at an End.

Polybius has a Story more explicitly to our Purpose, but he speaks of it with so
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much distrust himself, that I will not venture to produce it, lest it should give an Air of Romance to this Performance †.

Among the *Roman* Historians I can only produce an Example from *Livy*, of a Woman who was reported to have been delivered of Twins in a desolate uninhabited Island, where she was cast away, and had not seen a human Face for the Space of nine Years before her Labour. He tells us she was brought to *Rome*, and examined before the *Roman* Senate; but the Particulars of this Story are so very prolix and tedious, that I chuse to refer the Reader to the Original, in the fiftieth Book of that incomparable Historian.

This

† Θειρων δὲ τὴν Κίλτην δυσχεραίνουσαν, κ. τ. λ.

Polyb. Lib. III, pag. 230.

This is all I have been able to meet with in my reading ; which I was willing to produce, as it may give some Light and Confirmation to my Hypothesis ; but I appeal to the illustrious Mr. *W—rb—n*, that great Decider of old Problems and modern Controversies, who well knows the Zeal of Authors to have their Works thought original, whether notwithstanding any thing here quoted, the Merit of this great *Arcanum* does not of right belong to me ? I mention that Gentleman's Name, who now unquestionably stands foremost in the Catalogue of *British Writers*, with the most profound Respect ; and it would afford me infinite Pleasure, if he would give this Subject a Discussion in the next Volume of the *Divine L—g—n*, whenever he pleases to oblige the World with that long-expected Work : Or if by Chance he should happen not to have

Room for it, being already furnished with his Complement of Digressions (and to be sure one Book can hardly contain every thing) still I have the Vanity to expect a Letter from him by the first Post to thank me according to Custom, for the honorable Mention I have made of him, and with some Compliments on my Performance, to make an Overture of his Acquaintance.

It now remains, before I conclude, to explain the great Advantages that will flow from the Publication of this Treatise; for this it is, which must redeem me from the reproachful Name of a Projector, and rank me in the Number of those illustrious Worthies, who have invented useful Arts for the better Accommodation and Happiness of human Life.*

And

* *Inventas aut qui vitam excoluere per artes*, VIRG.
Quoted for the Sake of a Quotation.

And in the first Place, I hope I shall merit universally the Thanks of all the Fair Sex for disabusing Mankind on the Subject of Conception, and teaching them how a Woman may be with Child in a single State, consistently with the purest Virtue.

*Cur ego desperem fieri sine Coniuge Mater,
Et parere intacto, dummodo casta, viro?*

But before this was known, when the World was foolish enough to suppose Coition always previous to Conception, how many Ladies have innocently lost their Reputation? how many unhappy Creatures have fallen under the Censures of a malicious World, been excluded from Visits, left out of Card-Parties, and pointed at by Prudes, only for the slight Inconvenience of happening to be brought to Bed before Marriage?

riage? Whereas, when once this Discovery is spread, it will be easy for a young Lady to lose her Maidenhead without losing her Character, and to take the Air without any Dread of Calumny and Reproach in Consequence of so innocent a Gratification.

*Jam redit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna,
Jam nova progenies cælo demittitur alto.*

Another great Benefit, resulting from this Discovery, will be the utter Abolition of Matrimony, which has long been complained of by all the polite World, as a Nuisance grievous and intolerable, inconsistent with all the Articles of modern Pleasure, and destructive of that Freedom which of Right belongs to Gentlemen. In consequence whereof, we see Dukes and Dutcheßes, Lords and Ladies, and all the Great, whoring, divorcing, poisoning

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ing one another, starving one another, cutting one another's Throats, and practising every other genteel fashionable Art to break loose from their Fetters, and rescue themselves from this worse than *Egyptian* Bondage. Now as I am a most devoted Admirer of the Great, apt to esteem every thing wise, lawful and right, that comes from the Mouth of a Nobleman, I account myself happy to be Author of a Scheme, that falls in so naturally with their Desires, and will deliver them from that most pernicious Institution, supported by no other Authority than that of the Scriptures, an Authority long obsolete and out of Date with the politer Part of Mankind ! And as I cannot doubt but all Women for the future will chuse to propagate the Species upon the Plan here recommended, I can assure them for their Comfort, that their Satisfaction will be as great in this Way as in the ordinary and coarser

coarser Communication with Man : which indeed the Fondness that Ladies have always expressed for *Zephyrs*, abundantly proves, though hitherto they have been ignorant of the Cause of the agreeable Sensations excited by that amorous Wind.

But the most capital Advantage of all remains yet to be told, and in describing of this I must exalt my Style:

— *Major rerum mihi nascitur ordo,
Majus opus moveo.*

There is a certain Distemper most fatally epidemic, which has much employed the Speculation, and more the Practice of Mankind. Whether with Physicians we call it the *Lues Venerea*, with Pothecries the *Venereal Disease*, with Ladies the *French Distemper*, or with fine Gentlemen the *P—x*; it is known by all these

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Denominations, besides an infinite Number of inferior Titles, that mark the several Stages of this puissant, destroying Pestilence.

— — *Nomina mille,*

Mille nocendi artes.

Some tell you that *Columbus* brought it over from his new *American* World in a Ban-box, and that is nothing more than the Yaws operating differently upon *European* Constitutions †. Others are contented to go no farther for it than *France*, and very confidently assure us, that it was

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† However some People may contend for the modern Introduction of this Distemper, I am perswaded it is as old as the Days of *Hercules*, and that this illustrious Giant-killer was infected with it. The envenomed Shirt of *Nessus*, and the Torments he suffered by putting it on, are plainly a Poetick Allegory, which I interpret in the following easy Manner.—
Nessus p--x'd his Whore, and she p---x'd *Hercules*.

imported hither among other elegant Accomplishments, for which we have been indebted to that Land of Luxury and Refinement. But though its Origin be doubtful and uncertain, its Atchievements are unquestionably sure; and, oh, that I had the Pen of *Fracaſtorius* to deſcribe the Ravage it commits upon a human Body! Lend, lend me Aſſiſtance all ye battered Rakes, while with blackeſt Ink I undertake to paint the Havocks of that honourable Diſeaſe, of which thouſands of your Forefathers have died, and whereof yourſelves ſo vain-gloriouſly boaſt in Taverns and Coffee-houſes, to the great Advancement of Virtue and Morality. Say, illuſtrious — and — and —, for ye know, with what fatal Rapidity its Venom over-runs the Conſtitution, how it undermines the Teeth, unhinges the Noſe, foddens the Fleſh, ſtrikes Rottenneſs to the Bones, and poisons the very ſpinal Marrow. Say, farther, moſt

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enviable Sons of Pleasure ! for this also Experience may have taught you, how it spreads by Contagion, and operates by Communication. Some Husbands give it their Wives, and some Wives give it their Husbands. Nor does the Evil end with Life, but revives again in the Posterity, is *entailed* on the Heirs of great Families, inherited in sure Succession, and oftentimes, too often, proves the only thing that is inherited by Heirs of noble, but corrupted Blood. Hence arises an enervated Progeny, weak in their Persons, and weaker in their Understandings ; a puny, ill-compounded, unmanly Race, who bear about them the Marks of their Father's Wickedness in most legible Characters, and though liable to be blown away by every Blast of Wind, have the Arrogance to strut through the *Mall* with Swords by their Sides, and fancy themselves Men. Alas ! their Mother's Chambermaids would make better Men.

Non

*Non his juventus orta parentibus
Infecit æquor sanguine Gallico.*

Now this Distemper, so terrible in its Effects, and so pernicious in its Consequences, has been attacked for many Centuries by all the *Esculapian* Art in vain; † *Mercury* has exhausted all its fruitless Powers; Salivations exerted their cleansing Influence without Effect, and the mighty *Ward* with his illustrious Pill sits despairing in an Elbow-chair at *Whitehall*, to find himself defeated by this invincible Disease. But what neither physical Prescriptions, nor chirurgical Operations, what neither Empirics with their Pills, nor Graduates of the Faculty with their Purges, have been able to accomplish; I pretend to perform in a safe, easy, effectual manner, (*absit superbia dicto*) and for ever to drive

† *Cæsar* tells us our old *British* Ancestors worshiped *Mercury* above all the Gods, *Deum maxime Mercurium colunt*, &c. Their modern Descendants still worship the same Deity.

drive out the P---x from his Majesty's Dominions. If all in female Shape (for I dare not call them all Women) will agree to seclude themselves from the foul Embraces of Men for one Year (which I account a very modest Proposal, as I offer them a better Gratification in lieu of what they are to forfeit) this ruinous Plague must cease from among us. And I humbly recommend it, with all due Submission, to the Judgment and Consideration of the most honourable the L---ds of the P. C. whether a R---l Edict would not be well employ'd, to forbid all Copulation throughout the Kingdom for the Space of one whole Year, beginning from *Lady-day* next, in order to stop the Growth and Increase of a Contagion much more fatal than that which now sweeps away our horned Cattle, and equally deserving the Interposition of Authority.

But Objectors still may be apt to question, whether your *double-distill'd* Children,

dren, who pass thro' the seminal Vessels of both Sexes in the old way of Generation, are not of course more healthy and vigorous, than your single-distill'd Infants will be, who are to receive only the Nurture of a female Womb? In Confutation of which silly Prejudice, tho' I could produce several very cogent Arguments from the Depth of Philosophy, yet I chuse to answer this Query by another, Whether the present Race of Fathers, especially those in high Life, under the Circumstances I have described, are qualify'd to beget Children at all? But when Women are left to breed of themselves, and the Venereal Disease is banished from among us, we may then hope to see an Offspring robust and healthy; *British* Valour will then recover its ancient Glory; new *Cressys*, new *Agin-courts*, new *Blenbeims* succeed to grace our Annals,

Nor Henry be the last that conquers France.

Wherefore

Wherefore not doubting but my Scheme will immediately take place, I shall apply very soon for a Patent to secure to myself the sole Advantage of this Discovery, and in the mean time I have taken a House in the *Hay-market, dans la marche au foin*, where I shall give Attendance to all Women desirous of breeding, from the Hours of Seven or Eight in the Evening till Twelve at Night; and if they will quietly submit themselves to my Experiment, I will ensure their Pregnancy at the proper Time, calculating from the Hour they did me the Favour of their Visit. Let them consider that the Glory and Interest of *Great Britain are now incumbent upon them*, that it is in their Power to raise our Vigour, and as I may say, to mend the Breed of *Englishmen*. In so doing their Names will be recorded in History, as the illustrious Propagators of Heroism, the Founders of a new Sect of Men, and be handed down to Posterity equally famous with

with the *Spartan* and *Roman* Ladies, whose many gallant Atchievements for the Good of their Countries in Times of Distress, engaged Poets and Historians in their Praise.

But principally and earnestly I address myself to you, Gentlemen of the R—
S—y, *who shine in the Dignity of F. R. S.* and I hope you will recommend this Treatise to the World with all the Warmth and Zeal, that becomes the Promoters of useful Knowledge, the Patrons of Learning, the Judges of Science, and the Investigators of Truth.

I am, Gentlemen, with all possible Respect, Deference, Submission and Veneration,

Your most obedient, humble,
devoted Servant,

ABRAHAM JOHNSON.

F I N I S.